

Music as Medicine

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BACKGROUND

Attending the theatre, concerts, or the opera once a year or more has protective associations with both memory loss and semantic fluency. In 2025, the Goizueta Alzheimer's Disease Research Center at Emory University, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra (ASO), and Performance Hypothesis collaborated to make symphony concerts more accessible to people living with cognitive impairment and their care partners.

METHODS

On February 2, 2025, 190+ persons attended an ASO concert aimed at positively impacting people living with Alzheimer's and their caretakers. A survey with seven questions intended for the caretakers was included and 50 participants responded.

A post-activity "focus group" was conducted with attendees in order to to gather input as to what elements would improve the overall experience. Suggestions included a reserved room for pre- and post-event assembly, refreshments, and survey completion.

RESULTS

- A strong experience of joy and excitement in attending the concert, would recommend the program to a friend, and hope to attend a future concert (100% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed)
- Slightly less reported an experience of an increased sense of connection and/or that listening to music increased their sense of peace (between 12-16% disagreed)
- Mixed reviews on observing an increased positive mood for the attendee living with Alzheimer's (36% disagreed)

CONCLUSION

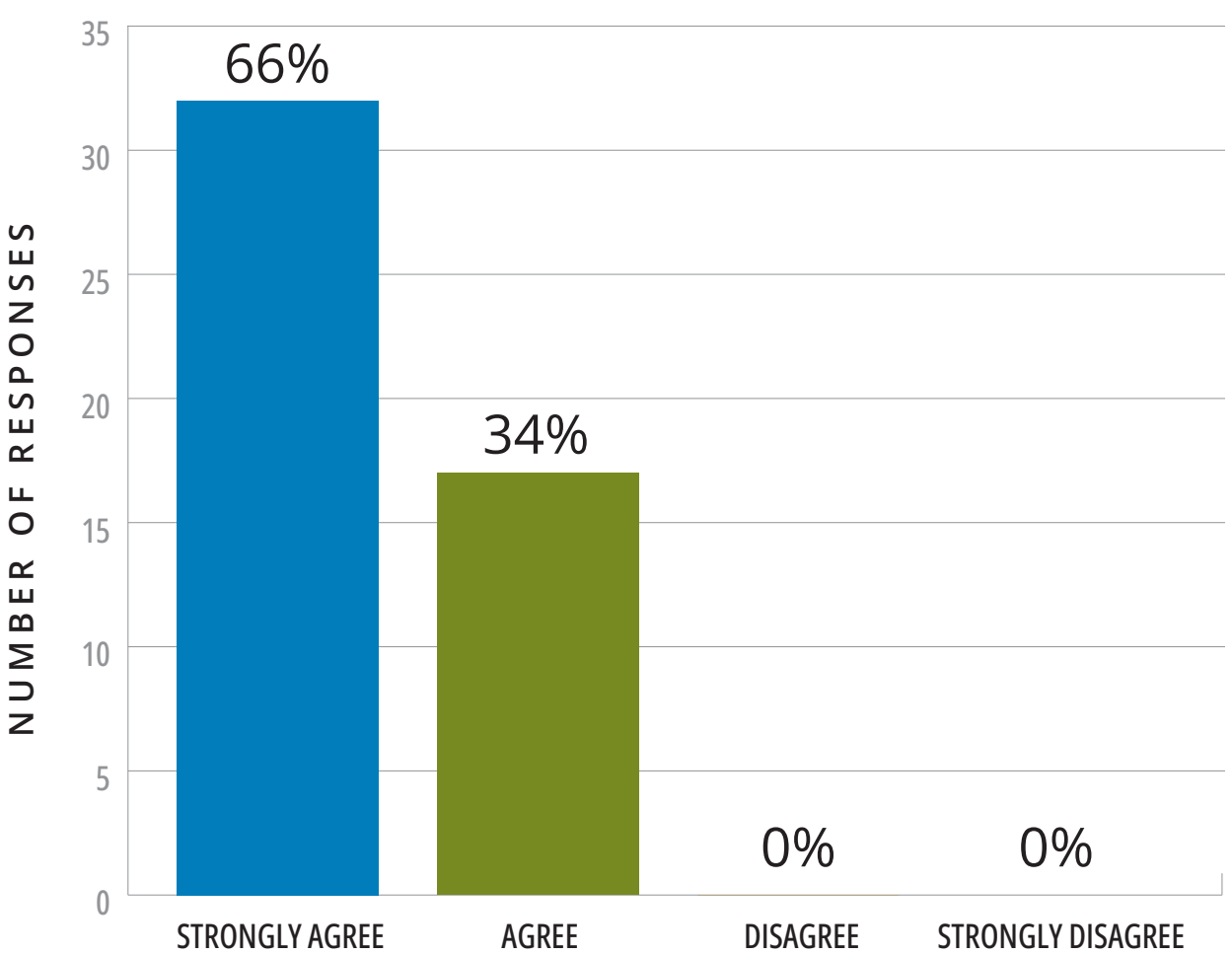
Attendance at the Symphony may improve mood and well-being for people with cognitive impairment and their families.

FUTURE RESEARCH

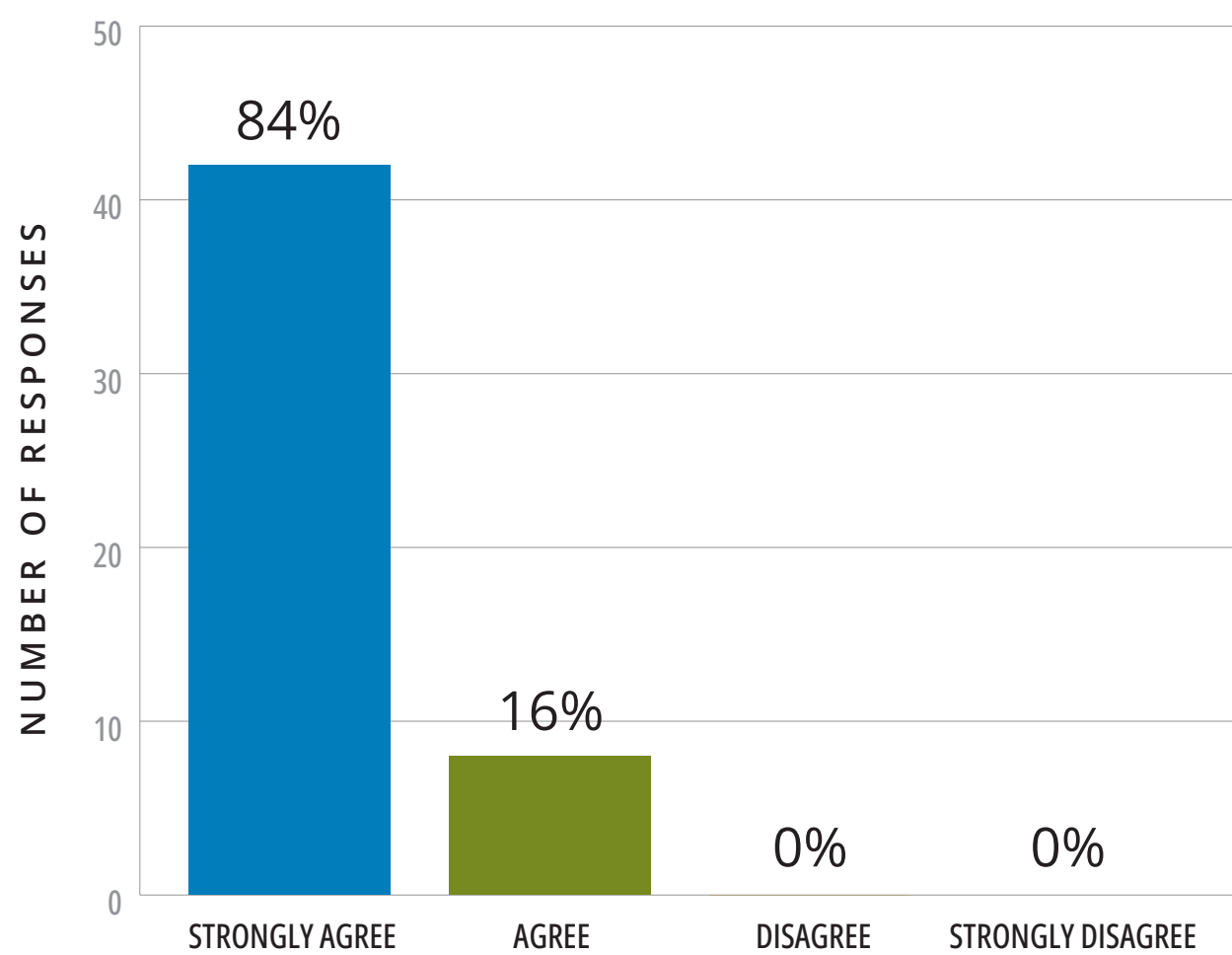
We have successfully received philanthropic funding to create an interventional project to determine how regular symphony attendance will affect mood, behavior and stress in 50 caregiving days of persons underrepresented in Alzheimer's disease research.

RESULTS

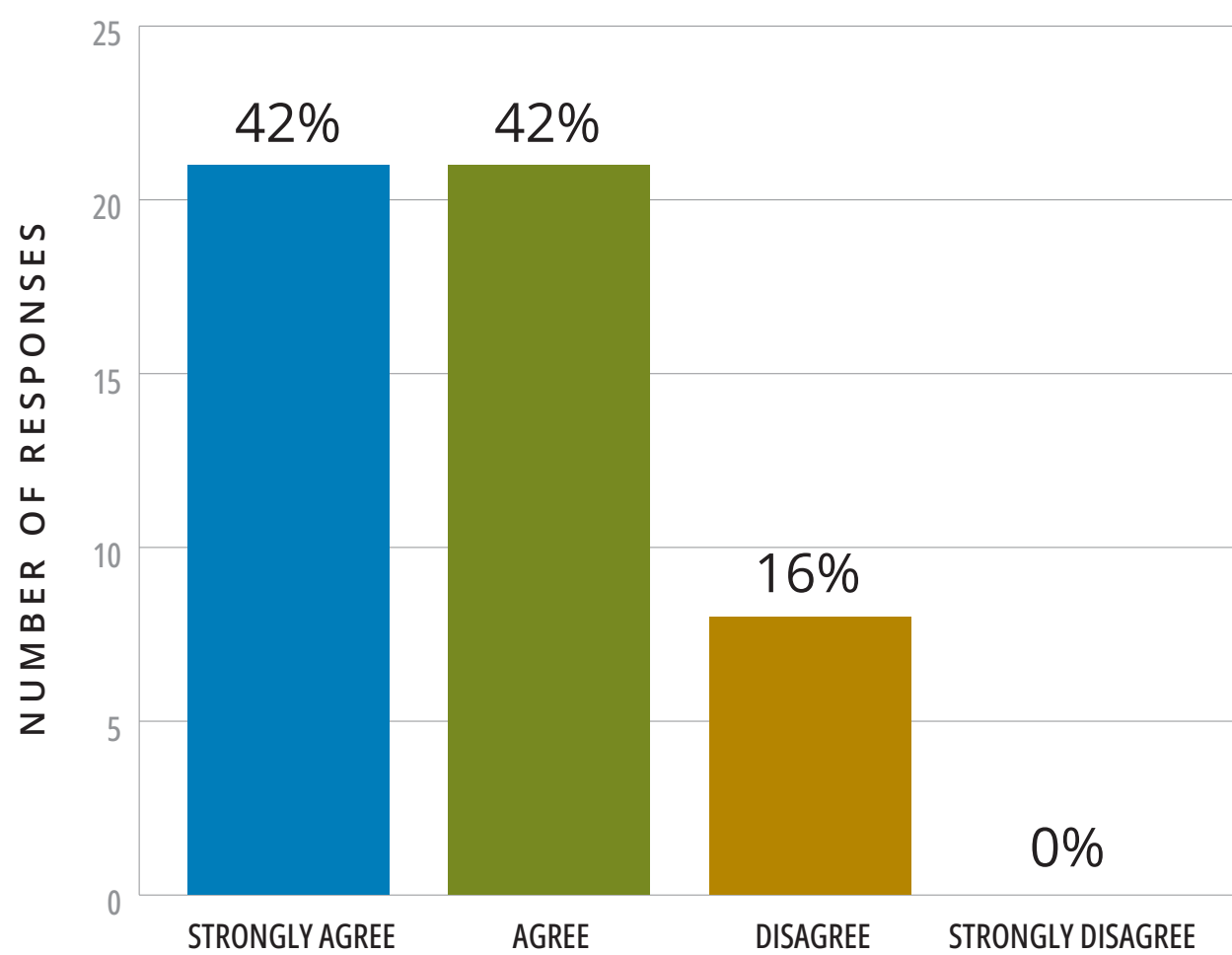
Reponses to: "I experienced a sense of excitement while getting ready to attend the concert, Beethoven Symphonies 2 and 5, with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra (ASO)."



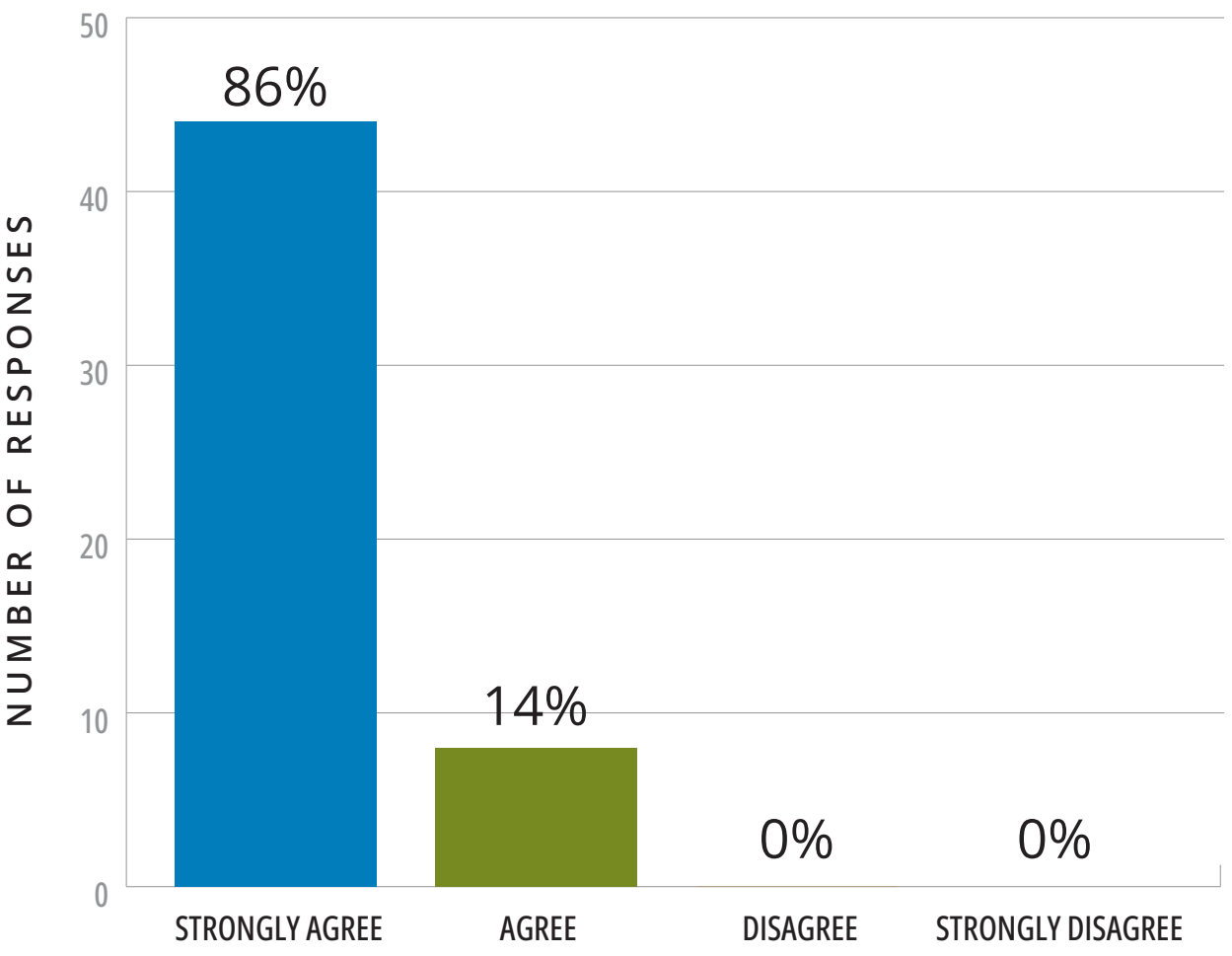
Reponses to: "I experienced a sense of joy while listening to the concert this afternoon."



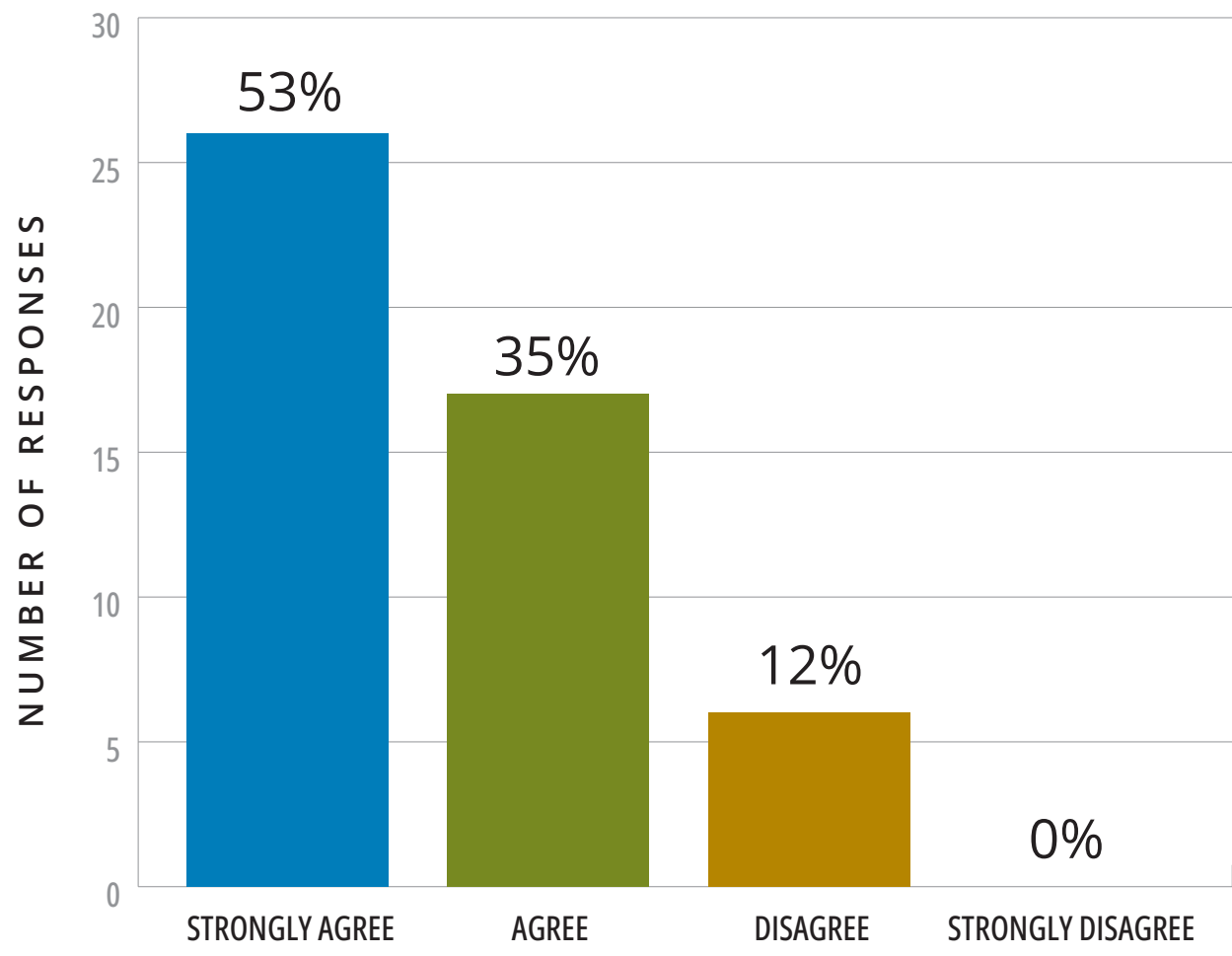
Reponses to: "I felt and increased sense of connection to the people around me while listening to the concert this afternoon."



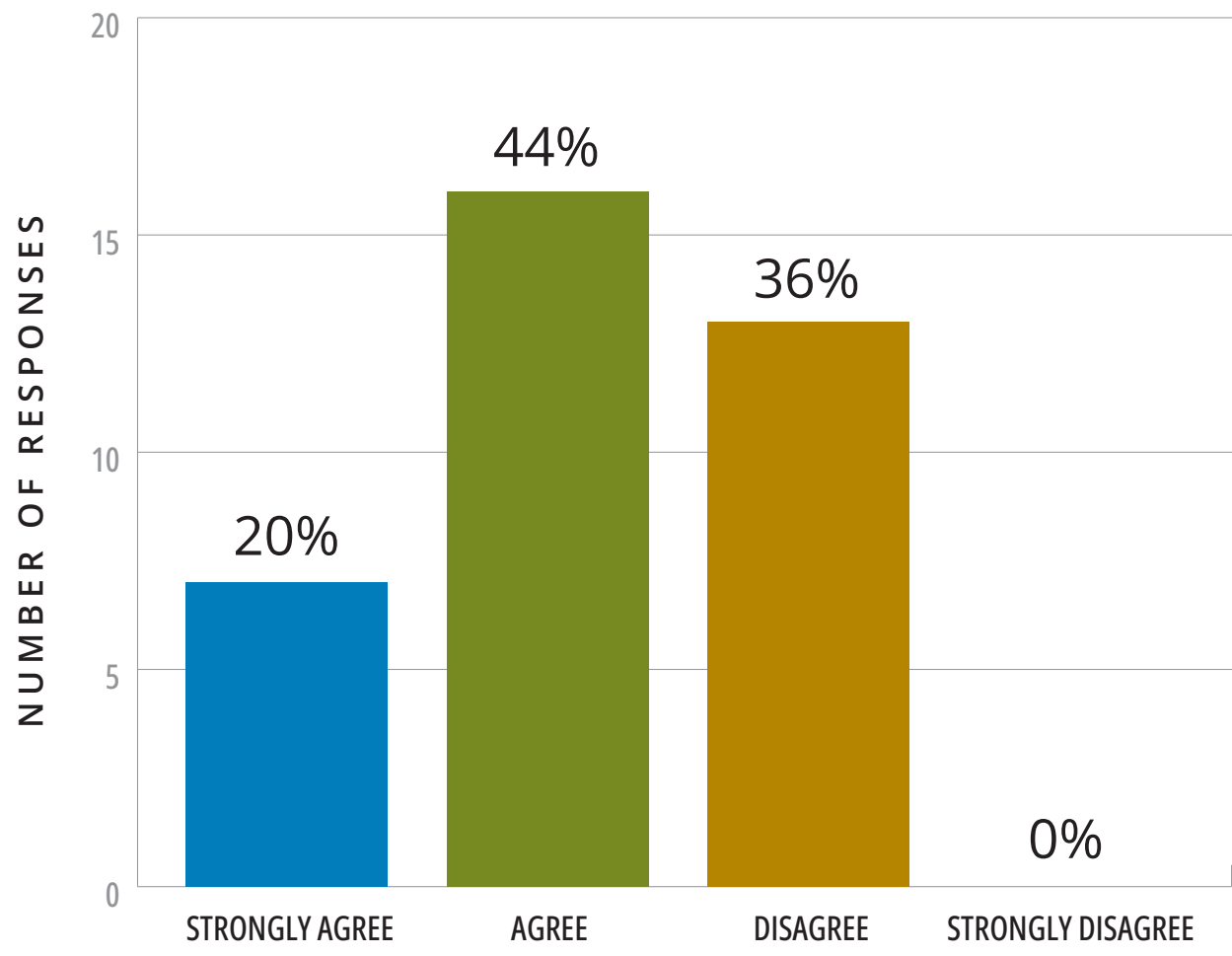
Reponses to: "I would highly recommend the ASO to another friend, family member, or caregiver."



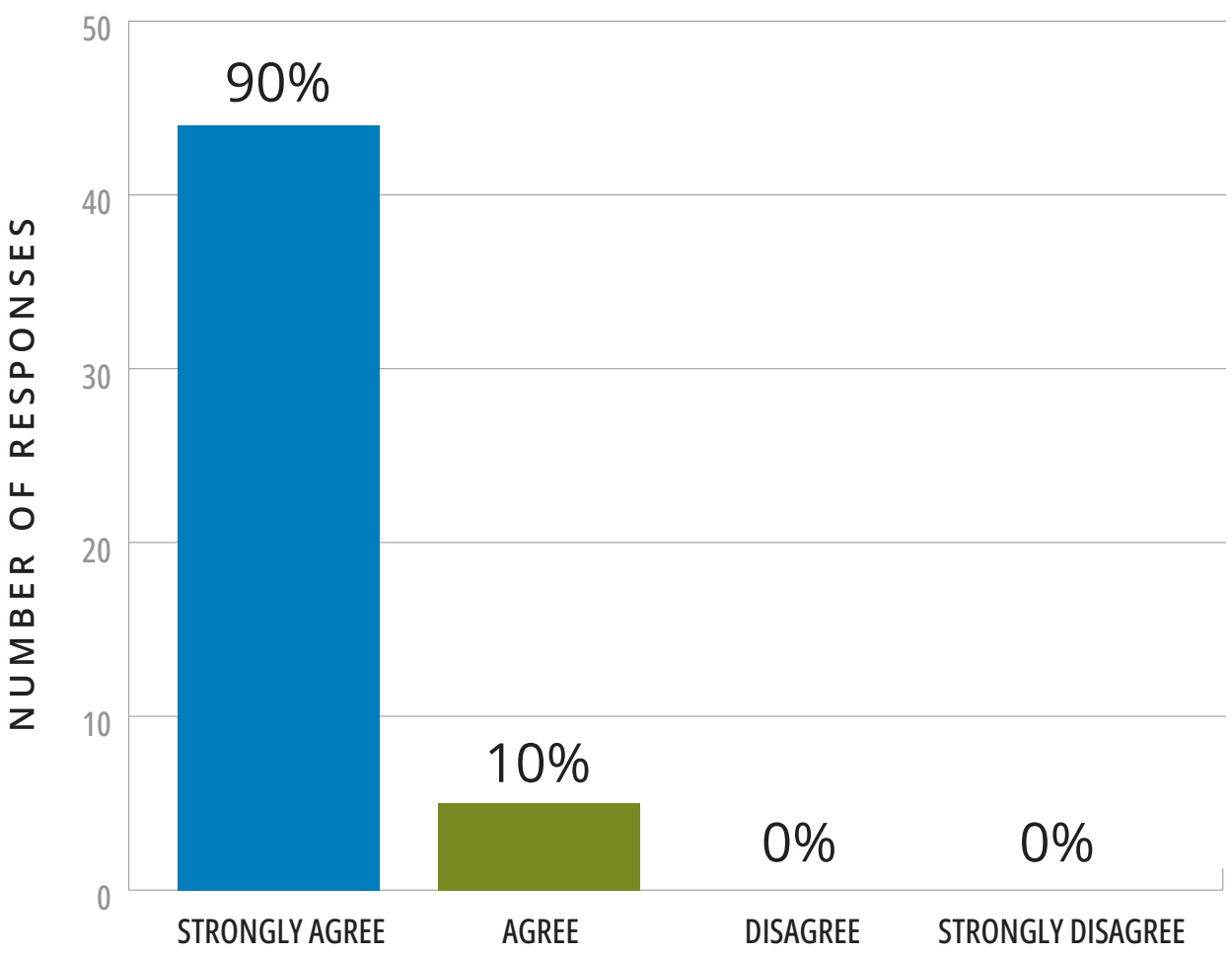
Reponses to: "I frequently listen to music to find a sense of peace or healing in times of stress and uncertainty."



Reponses to: "I noticed a positive change in behavior or mood from a person living with dementia who attended the concert with me."



Reponses to: "I would like to attend another ASO concert in the future."



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